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ACTION ARA-15

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INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
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AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 12065: GDS, 8/7/86 (FRIEDMAN, TOWNSEND B.) OR-P
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PINT, BL, AR
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT VIDELA ON BOLIVIA

1. (U) PRESIDENT VIDELA HAS NOW PUBLICLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AND HIS GOVERNMENT WITH THE PATE OF GARCIA MEZA AND THE BOLIVIAN COUP. VIDELA MADE THESE REMARKS IN CORDOBA AUGUST 5 IN THE COURSE OF A PRESS CONFERENCE THERE. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF VIDELA'S REMARKS, THE FOLLOWING IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THESE COMMENTS AS REPORTED IN BUENOS AIRES PRESS:

QUOTE ARGENTINA HAS MAINTAINED MILITARY ASSISTANCE TEAMS IN BOLIVIA FOR A LONG TIME -- THIS IS THE FACT OF THE SITUATION. WHEN SOMEBODY WANTS TO MAGNIFY OR TWIST THINGS IT IS SAID THAT THESE PEOPLE ARE THERE TO HELP THE BOLIVIANS AND IN THIS CASE TRANSFERRING TO THEM ARGENTINE EXPERIENCE IN CARRYING OUT A COUP. THIS IS A DISTORTION. COUPS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED NOR PRESCRIBED.

ARGENTINA HAS HAD NO ROLE IN SPONSORING THIS MILITARY SOLUTION IN BOLIVIA. I STATE THAT BETWEEN TWO OPTIONS THE FORMALLY CORRECT ONE, THE ELECTORAL ROUTE, AND THE FORMALLY INCORRECT ONE, A MILITARY COUP, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE DEGREE OF RISK THAT EACH HAD FOR THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT, WE HAVE BEEN MORE SYMPA-

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THETIC TO THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE. IT IS ENOUGH TO SAY WHAT WAS THE RISK: WE DO NOT WANT IN SOUTH AMERICA WHAT CUBA IS IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

...FROM THIS MOMENT ARGENTINA EXPECTING NONINTERVENTION DOES NOT VOTE FAVORABLY ON THE MOTION IN THE OAS TO CONDEMN BOLIVIA. ARGENTINA ABSTAINS AND THEN MANIFESTS SYMPATHY NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE MILITARY BUT BECAUSE THIS SOLUTION APPROACHES MOST CLOSELY OUR OBJECTIVE OF NOT HAVING CUBA ON OUR BACK. THIS SYMPATHY MUST BE DEMONSTRATED IN CONCRETE WAYS: RECOGNITION IS A POLITICAL GESTURE; ECONOMIC AID IN FOOD THAT MAY BE ASKED OF US IS A GESTURE OF SOLIDARITY AND SOME TYPE OF CREDIT LINES TO HELP BOLIVIA GET OUT OF ITS RATHER PROSTRATE ECONOMIC SITUATION. WE ARE NOT SEEKING TO HELP MILITARY OR CIVILIANS. THIS ASSISTANCE IS TO A BROTHER PEOPLE THAT WE DID NOT WANT TO SEE FALL PRISONER OF A SITUATION INTO WHICH WE ALMOST FELL. UNQUOTE

3. (C) WHATEVER VIDELA'S REMARKS SEEM TO SAY ABOUT ARGENTINA'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE BOLIVIAN COUP'S PREPARATION, THEY ARE CLEAR ON ONE POINT. AS VIDELA SUGGESTS, THE GOVERNMENT HERE WANTS GARCIA MEZA TO SUCCEED AND IS PREPARED TO INVEST HEAVILY TO ASSURE THAT OUTCOME, WITH ADVICE, WITH GOODS AND, APPARENTLY, WITH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.
RUSER

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